

# Armstrong Magazine

Fall 2014

Marketing & Communications Department, Armstrong State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/armstrong-magazine>

---

## Recommended Citation

Marketing & Communications Department, Armstrong State University, "Armstrong Magazine" (2014). *Armstrong Magazine*. 5.  
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/armstrong-magazine/5>

This magazine is brought to you for free and open access by the Armstrong News & Featured Publications at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Armstrong Magazine by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu).

A MAGAZINE OF ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

# Armstrong

FALL 2014

## International **FLaIR**

STUDENTS FROM 71  
COUNTRIES ENRICH LIFE  
ON CAMPUS PG. 6

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

& Report to Donors  
*A Special Supplement pg. 15*





## what's inside

campus news	3
international students	6
faculty profiles	10
green zone	12
alumni awards	14
president's report	15
donor's report	19
alumni profiles	30
class notes	32
armstrong flashback	35

## Armstrong

### EDITOR

Allison Hersh

### DESIGNERS

Stacy Claywell

Joan Lehon '92

Michael Lowe

### PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Katherine Arntzen

### COPY EDITOR

Karen Cooper '11

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Rachael Flora

Jessica Leigh Lebos

Brittany McClure

*Armstrong* magazine is produced by Marketing & Communications, with support from the Armstrong State University Foundation.

Let us hear from you!

We'd love your feedback on this issue, as well as what you'd like to see in upcoming issues of *Armstrong*. Please email

[allison.hersh@armstrong.edu](mailto:allison.hersh@armstrong.edu)  
or call 912.344.2971.

To change your mailing address, call 912.344.2738 or email [alumni@armstrong.edu](mailto:alumni@armstrong.edu).



[facebook.com/ArmstrongAlumni](https://facebook.com/ArmstrongAlumni)



[@Armstrong\\_U](https://twitter.com/Armstrong_U)

### ABOUT THE COVER

Clara Perez Marcos, a Spanish tennis player, is part of the university's community of international students. Cover photography by Katherine Arntzen.



## New Degree Programs in Business Economics, Biochemistry

In the fall 2014 semester, Armstrong launched two new undergraduate degree programs in business economics and biochemistry. Both programs were approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents in response to growing student demand.

Armstrong's B.S. in Business Economics emphasizes workforce development firmly informed by a liberal arts education and provides an opportunity for students to gain practical business skills and develop complex practical reasoning. This degree prepares graduates for a knowledge-based economy that relies on creativity and critical thinking, while providing the quantitative skills essential for the analysis of business problems.

The B.S. in Biochemistry at Armstrong provides a solid academic foundation, serving as a bridge between Chemistry and Biology and exploring the chemical side of biological processes. The degree appeals to students interested in attending medical, dental, veterinary, pharmacy or optometry schools and offers a wide range of career opportunities.



## NAME CHANGE



Armstrong State University officially rolled out its new name on July 1, offering free Leopold's ice cream in Compass Plaza to students, faculty and staff to celebrate the name change.

The university received approval from the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents on April 16 to drop the word "Atlantic" from "Armstrong Atlantic State University." The more streamlined name will help minimize confusion and create a stronger brand for Armstrong. The Board of Regents added "Atlantic" to the university's name in 1996 in an effort to give Armstrong a geographic identifier.

"Today is a great day for Armstrong State University," said Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken. "The Armstrong name has always been part of our tradition of excellence. We appreciate the support of our faculty, staff, students, alumni and community leaders as we continue to enhance student success."

## Armstrong Liberty Center Groundbreaking

Armstrong State University and the City of Hinesville hosted a groundbreaking for the new Armstrong Liberty Center in Hinesville on Sept. 10. The event included remarks by Georgia Governor Nathan Deal and University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank M. Huckaby.

The 21,000-square-foot building will more than double the size of the facility currently located in leased commercial space in a local strip shopping center. The new facility, which will open to students in the fall of 2015, will include classrooms, science laboratories, faculty/staff offices, common areas, student services and support areas. The building's design will be sensitive to the aesthetic fabric of the existing community and will complement the existing downtown streetscape.





## PAINT THE TOWN MAROON

On April 3, Armstrong hosted the ultimate pep rally in downtown Savannah. Paint the Town Maroon, a citywide celebration of Pirate pride, took place in Johnson Square, with The Savannah Bank (now South State Bank) serving as the presenting sponsor for this high-energy event.

Armstrong alumni, students, faculty, staff and supporters joined local business leaders to celebrate the university's 2013-2014 fundraising successes and to underscore how critical Armstrong is in our community.

Mark your calendar for the 2015 Paint the Town event, which will be held on March 27. To learn more about how you can get involved, please contact Armstrong's Office of Advancement at 912.344.2870 or visit [www.paintthetownmaroon.com](http://www.paintthetownmaroon.com).

With alumni working in every field, from education to healthcare, Armstrong makes a positive difference every day and helps students Start Strong.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

### PRESENTED BY



### GOLD SPONSORS



*Dr. and Mrs.  
John Duttonhaver*

### SILVER SPONSORS



### BRONZE SPONSORS

Laura Barrett and Ed Maietta  
Dr. Joyce and Dr. James Bergin  
Mary Burnett  
Ed and Gail Davis  
Kathy and Drew Ernst  
Reinhold and Julie Gerbsch  
Molly and Arthur Gignilliat  
Amy Heaston  
Bill Kelso  
Georj Lewis  
Mercer Williams House  
Museum and Shop  
National Office Systems  
Pamela L. O'Quinn  
Carter and Mildred Samples  
Sandy Streater

### COMMUNITY SPONSORS



## Armstrong Professors Get NEH Fellowships, NSF Grants

Ella Howard, Ph.D., an associate professor of history, received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) fellowship to attend the Doing Digital History summer institute at George Mason University's Roy Rosenzweig Center for History in New Media in August. She was one of 25 historians selected from across the United States to attend this special workshop, which showcased new media methods and tools.

In addition, assistant professor of geography Amy Potter, Ph.D., secured a \$50,000 National Science Foundation Grant to fund research focusing on historic Southern plantation culture. The study will compare three major plantation regions, including the Lowcountry area of coastal Georgia and South Carolina, the James River region in Virginia and the River Road District in southern Louisiana. The three-year research project will enable Potter and an Armstrong student to travel to various historic sites to participate in fieldwork and data collection.



### Donna Brooks Promoted to Associate Provost

Donna Brooks has been promoted to associate provost for academic affairs and graduate studies. In her new position, she chairs the Institutional Review Board and provides oversight to graduate studies and to the offices of Grants and Sponsored Programs, Assessment, Online and Blended Learning, Institutional Research, Faculty Development and Faculty Information.

Brooks has a long history of excellence at Armstrong. Her experience dates back to 1995, when she began teaching speech-language pathology in the department of special education. She was named the department head of Communication Sciences and Disorders in 2006. Most recently, she served as the assistant dean of the College of Health Professions for five years.



### Amy Zieziula Hired As New Assistant Dean of Student Integrity

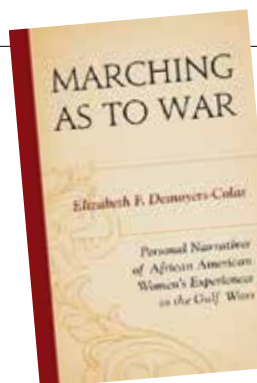
Amy Zieziula recently joined Armstrong as assistant dean of student integrity. In her new position, she is responsible for upholding the university's Honor Code and Code of Conduct and providing educational outreach regarding civility on college campuses.

Before joining Armstrong, Zieziula worked as the coordinator for student conduct at Georgia Southern University for three years, where she served as a conduct officer and resolved honor violations. She also served as the interim associate dean for student conduct and implemented the Institutional Effectiveness Plan for Georgia Southern University's Office of Student Conduct.

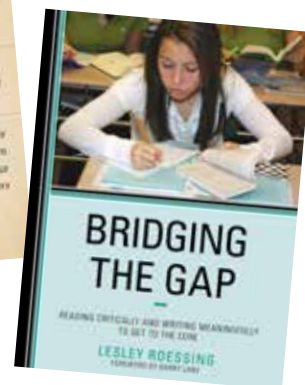


## NEW FACULTY BOOKS

**Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas, Ph.D.**, associate professor of Communication and African American Studies, recently published *Marching as to War: Personal Narratives of African American Women's Experiences in the Gulf Wars* (University Press of America). Desnoyers-Colas explores the key role African American servicewomen played during recent U.S. wars in the Middle East.



**Lesley Roessing**, director of the Coastal Savannah Writing Project, has published *Bridging the Gap: Reading Critically & Writing Meaningfully to Get to the Core* (Rowman & Littlefield Education). Designed to offer a bridge between fiction and nonfiction, this book focuses on memoir writing, which can serve as "way in" to literacy for adolescents.







# international FLAIR

BY JESSICA LEIGH LEBOS





Armstrong State University attracts students from 71 countries around the world, providing a warm, welcoming environment that supports success, rewards hard work and celebrates diversity. Please meet a few of our stellar international students, who contribute to the rich cultural experience at Armstrong.

## ROWAIDA QUOTAH

Saudi Arabia

Respiratory Therapy

Class of 2015

Some students who come to Armstrong find the hot summers a bit challenging.

Not Rowaida Quotah, who hails from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where the 120+ temperatures make Savannah seem like a breezy oasis. While the humidity levels may be a bit lower in the desert near the Persian Gulf, she says the climate feels pretty close to home.

Still, adjusting to life in the American South has had its challenges.

"Saudi culture is very different from American culture," explains Rowaida. "What I miss most is the food and family gatherings. I faced some problems with the language at first because I am not used to communicating in English, but I am much better now."

She sought out Armstrong for the university's reputation as one of the strongest respiratory therapy programs in the world. Though laser-focused on her major, she has found the comprehensiveness of the rest of her credit requirements fascinating.



*"Armstrong supports its students in many ways," Rowaida says of the administrative staff. "They all work hard and are pleased to provide anything that can help the international students and make them feel comfortable and welcome."*

She keeps busy with her studies but found time to participate in Armstrong's international food festival earlier this year, where she cooked a few traditional halal dishes for her fellow students.

"That was one of the most unique experiences I've had," Rowaida says. "I enjoyed presenting Saudi food and tasting different countries' food."

While almost everything but the weather has taken some getting used to, Rowaida says she has enjoyed her campus experience and would recommend Armstrong to anyone in the world seeking a quality education.





# THOMAS KAVOORI

India

Economics with IT Certificate  
Class of 2015

When Thomas Kavoori moved from his hometown of Hyderabad in South India's Andhra Pradesh region to Savannah, he imagined skyscrapers and bustling city streets.

"When I first came to the United States, I assumed that every single place would look like New York, with people and buildings," he laughs. "I kept telling my friends that I had come to the 'boring' part of America. Now I like it here. It's relaxed, beautiful and the people are great."

Hyderabad is also a center for medical, accounting and computer careers, and growing up there influenced Thomas's interest in economics and information technology. His mother was already in Savannah teaching in the public schools, and he took her colleagues' advice to enroll at Armstrong.

His first foray into economics intimidated him, but department chair Yassaman Saadatmand encouraged him to stick with the challenging coursework.

"One day, Saadatmand walked into the classroom and said, 'I don't care how smart you are. What I really care about is your hard work!' That had a big impact on me," he recalls. "After hearing what she had to say, I pushed myself to understand the concepts and, after a while, I fell in love with the subject. I got an 'A' in Economics classes after that."

Thomas calls Armstrong "very conducive to social health" and has found a sense of belonging in the Baptist Collegiate Ministries, where he spends time with students of faith from all over the world and volunteers his time.

After graduation, Thomas plans to work for a large company like Microsoft or to pursue a career in academia. Either way, he wants to pick up a Ph.D. in Economics along the way. Though life might be more bustling in India, he says he couldn't be happier with the quality of his Armstrong experience.

Invoking an all-important term he's learned in his economics classes, he calls Armstrong "a good return on investment."



*"I went from 'immigrant introvert Indian student' to an organizational leader within a few years," Thomas says. "It's been a wonderful experience!"*



## MICHELLE BURGHARDT

Germany  
Economics  
Class of 2015

Michelle Burghardt — an Honors Program student who originally hails from Coesfeld, Germany — loves the fact that she's not just a number at Armstrong.

This Economics major is impressed that professors know her by name and are genuinely interested in helping her achieve her goals.

"Armstrong's professors are so accessible to students and always willing to help if you show them that you want to do your part and don't expect to have everything served to you on a silver platter," she says. "At Armstrong, professors are actually concerned with how we are doing, what we want to achieve in life and how they can help us achieve those goals. It's great to feel that they truly care about you."

Since enrolling at Armstrong, Michelle has landed prestigious internships — and golden networking opportunities — with Mercedes in Berlin and the World Trade Center in Savannah. She's a member of the International Student Organization and a graduate of the Nick Mamalakis Emerging Leaders Program.

"I chose Armstrong because it combined all the elements I was looking for in a college: small class sizes and an affordable but excellent education, all in the perfect setting of Savannah, a charming southern city with rich history and proximity to the beach."

She's particularly passionate about economics and is considering enrolling in an MBA program and pursuing a career in business after she graduates from Armstrong.

Michelle currently serves as a research assistant for Armstrong's Economic Monitor, gathering important data about the latest economic trends affecting the Savannah area.



## CLARA PEREZ MARCOS

Spain  
Economics  
Class of 2015

Clara Perez Marcos has been a star player on the women's tennis team at Armstrong since she was a freshman. The bubbly young woman from Madrid, Spain, helped lead the Pirates to national titles in 2012 and 2013. The team finished up last season ranked No. 2 in the nation, and Clara hopes to bring it back to No. 1 in 2015.

Being part of a team sport gave her a ready-made set of friends, but there were still challenges. She got the hang of the language fairly quickly with on-campus tutoring, but mealtimes were especially perplexing. In Spain, lunch is usually served around 2 in the afternoon and dinner as late as 10 p.m. — quite different from the American way.

*"Going to another continent is a big risk; you never know what you're going to find," Clara says. "Coming to Savannah, I found nice people trying to help me as much as they could!"*

This Spanish athlete plans to take her sharpened language skills into a business internship and then a master's degree program after she graduates. Ultimately, she hopes to work in a sports-related field either in the U.S. or Europe. She's been amazed at the support that Armstrong gives its international students, both financially and emotionally, by providing scholarships and social activities.

"It's a small school, which I like, but there's always so much fun happening," she raves. "I love meeting people from different places all over the world."



# phenomenal faculty

## SARA PLASPOHL, Ph.D

COORDINATOR OF MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Teaching at Armstrong since: 1994

**Best part of my job:** "It's fun to see students go out and do things, and then they come back and tell me about their experiences."

Sara Plaspohl's love of mentoring and setting a positive example makes her the perfect embodiment of a teacher.

"I'm just trying to make a difference and help students help themselves," she says.

Plaspohl is the program coordinator for the Master of Public Health program at Armstrong and has three degrees from Armstrong and a Doctor in Public Health from Georgia Southern University.

Before joining Armstrong, she worked at Memorial Health University Medical Center as a Research Ethics Officer, overseeing the Institutional Review Board process for more than 250 clinical trials.

She believes in the importance of being a good role model.

"A lot of what we learn from others is modeled behavior," she says. "I want to instill that enthusiasm and inspire as our students learn about becoming a public health professional. When people care about you, you tend to step up and perform at a higher level."

Plaspohl is also the driving force behind the tobacco-free policy on Armstrong's campus. Her doctoral dissertation assessed the policies of all tobacco-free schools in the United States, and that experience inspired her to lead Armstrong's task force to research similar options.

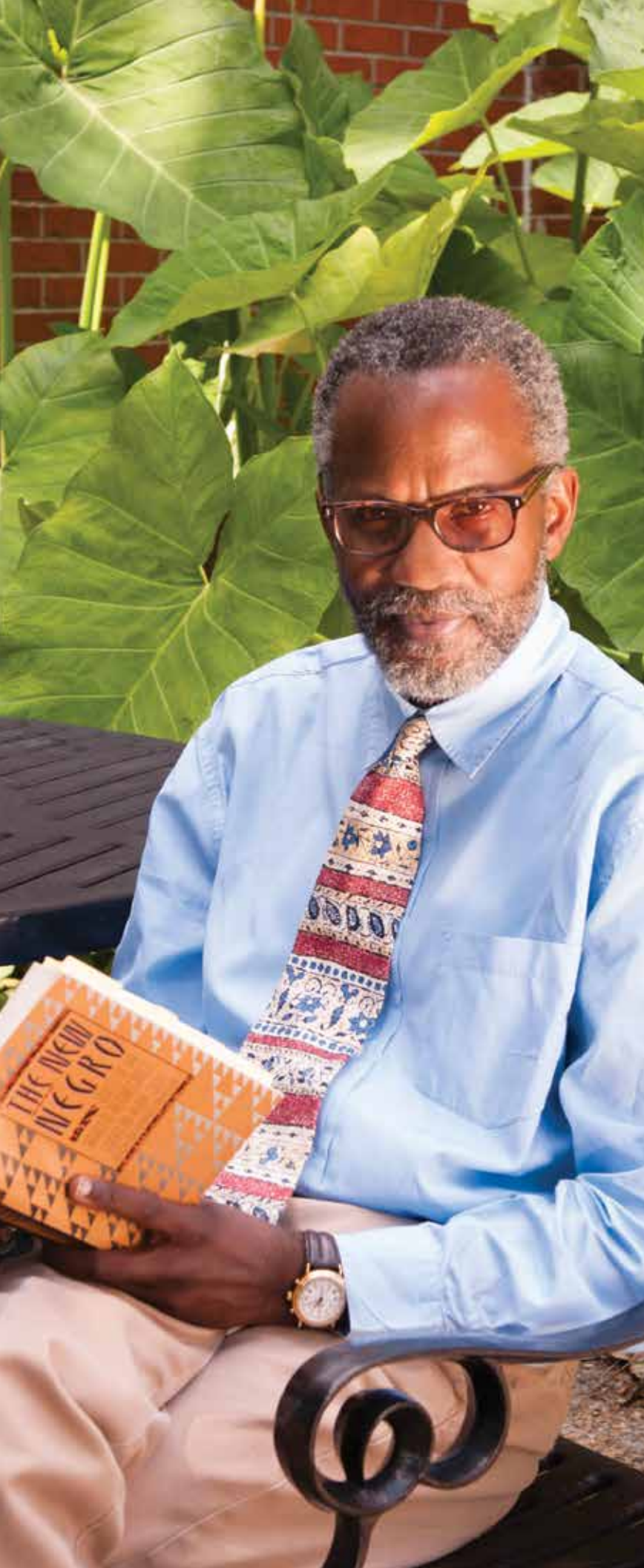
After receiving the information collected by the task force, Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken enacted Armstrong's tobacco-free policy in August 2012, a move Plaspohl calls "very gutsy." In October 2014, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents banned tobacco at all public schools across the state.

"Armstrong took a leadership role in serving as a resource for our colleagues in the USG system as they worked to implement the newly mandated tobacco-free policy," she says. "I'm thrilled to see the USG system go tobacco-free and know this decision will have a positive impact on the health of students, faculty and staff across the state."

.....







## MICHAEL BENJAMIN, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Teaching at Armstrong since: 2009

Best part of my job: "The engagement with the students."

Michael Benjamin, assistant professor of history at Armstrong, started his career as an attorney, serving as a successful civil litigator in Philadelphia.

"My interest in history evolved over the years," he explains. "I've always been interested in books as objects and artifacts."

This dedicated scholar decided to switch careers and return to school, earning an M.A. in the History of the Book in America, an M. Phil. in the Philosophy of History and a Ph.D. in Modern History and Literature from Drew University in Madison, N.J. He taught at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio, before joining the faculty at Armstrong five years ago.

In the classroom, Benjamin is an energetic professor who encourages students to think bigger and dig deeper in classes like Political and Constitutional History of Georgia and the United States, African-American History, Public History, Archival Methods, The Harlem Renaissance and Topics in African-American History.

"I encourage a critical thinking approach and invite students to look at forces beneath the surface that contribute to our day-to-day experiences," he says.

This accomplished faculty member sees a number of parallels between practicing law and teaching history.

"The practice of trial law, in certain aspects, is not unlike the work of a historian," he explains. "Historians, like trial lawyers, are concerned with 'evidence' and use that evidence to form 'arguments' in an attempt to persuade others of their position."

Benjamin involves students in his ongoing research focusing on the *Encyclopedia Africana* and has a deep passion for African-American history. This summer, he presented a paper at the Université Paris-Sorbonne in France and conducted research in New York and Washington, D.C., but he feels most at home in the classroom at Armstrong, where he appreciates the rich diversity among the university's student population.

"I love the students at Armstrong because they challenge me in a variety of ways," he explains. "I often find myself serving as a mentor and providing models for career choices for students. I enjoy the interaction and the give and take. It's very satisfying."

.....



---

# GREEN ZONE

**PROGRAM SUPPORTS VETERANS ON CAMPUS**

---

BY BRITTANY D. McCLURE



**F**or many veterans, transitioning from the structured, demanding and sometimes dangerous life of the military to an academically focused college campus can be difficult.

Textbooks, notepads and laptops fill the duffle bags that once contained life's necessities during deployment to a combat zone. Some veterans feel out of place on campus, and many are searching for the camaraderie that came so naturally in uniform.

Now, thanks to a Strategic Planning and Resource Council (SPARC) grant, veterans and active duty military at Armstrong can turn to the Green Zone, a special program designed to provide locations and personnel recognized by veterans as a safe place to aid in their transition from military to university and civilian life.

### THE GREEN LIGHT

In 2012, Armstrong Liberty Center director Pete Hoffman had an idea to create a program that would assist veterans in starting a new life as a student.

As a retired U.S. Army colonel who dedicated 30 years of his life to his country, Hoffman knew first-hand the challenges civilian life can present.

"If you look at where Armstrong is located, it just makes sense that we would be a center of excellence for military education," says Hoffman. "There are more than 24,000 active-duty military in our area, and as a state school, we should be a place where they could come, be comfortable and use their benefits."

He turned to the Green Zone program at Virginia Commonwealth University for guidance.

"We contacted them and added our own twist to the program," says Hoffman.

Hoffman recruited Army Veteran Phil Gore to take Green Zone off the ground at Armstrong, and soon Gore became the military and veterans program coordinator for the Armstrong Green Zone. Armstrong is now only one of a handful of other schools in the country offering some form of the program.

### IN THE ZONE

Green Zone held its first training session for faculty and staff on Feb. 19 with an attendance of 40 people and a wait list of 17. The format of the Green Zone certification sessions contributes to the program's success. The

extensive training is broken out into three phases. The first phase briefs the group on general information about the program, while the second and third phases are more hands-on.

In February, the first class of Green Zone volunteers took a field trip to Hunter Army Airfield, where they had one-on-one interaction with soldiers, walked the flight line, looked inside aircrafts and even trained with real weapons with simulated fire.

"They were able to experience a day in the life of a soldier and, through simulation, were able to see soldiers in action in the desert," Gore says.

At the end of the trip, Green Zone volunteers ate lunch in the dining facility with a large group of soldiers who took the time to share stories of their military experiences.

The training typically wraps up with a three-hour block of instruction, which at previous sessions has included speakers from Veteran's Heart Georgia, a nonprofit organization of veterans and their families, healing professionals and concerned citizens.

### SUCCESS AHEAD

Since the Green Zone's first training session, the program

has held two continuing education sessions, one of which took 12 Armstrong faculty and staff members on a field trip to Fort Stewart and the Savannah Recruiting Command.

"We are trying to get educators to see what soldiers do and promote the military environment," Gore explains.

The faculty toured the Army Education Center, Battalion Motor Pool, dining facility, Wynn Army Hospital and the Restoration Center. The next Green Zone training session is scheduled for this fall and already has 40 faculty and staff on the list.

"In August, we started holding continuing education sessions once a month and plan to hold Green Zone certification sessions once a semester," Gore explains.

"Armstrong Green Zone is becoming the model for military transition programs at other universities. At the end of the day, we don't just want to be a military-friendly institution. We want to create a program that will serve as a model to help more veteran students and more institutions across the country."



---

# ARMSTRONG ANNOUNCES 2014 Alumni Award Recipients

---



Robert Strozier, '49



Drew Ernst, '74

Armstrong hosted its first-ever Alumni Awards Gala on Friday, Oct. 10, during Celebrate Armstrong Weekend. The gala attracted more than 250 alumni and included a black-tie optional dinner at the Armstrong Center.

During the event, which benefits Armstrong scholarships, the Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to HunterMaclean attorney Drew Ernst, '74. The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes excellence in professional, community or public service. Ernst received a B.A. in Political Science in 1974 and is a longtime partner at HunterMaclean's Savannah office. He has practiced law for more than 30 years in the areas of environmental law, land use, commercial real estate development and industrial development.

Armstrong Professor Emeritus Robert Strozier, '49, received the Outstanding Alumni Award, which honors service to the university. Strozier attended Armstrong in the late 1940s and returned in 1955 as a Professor of Languages and Literature. He was named Outstanding Professor of the Year many times over the years, served as department head and established a math scholarship in memory of his daughter.



*The Notable Alumni Award was presented to 15 individuals including:*

**Doug Andrews, Sr., '69**  
General Court-Martial Judge,  
U.S. Army, Retired

**Anne M. Bennett, '93**  
Critical Care Clinical Nurse  
Specialist, Memorial University  
Medical Center

**Robert F. Brown, Jr., '77, '78**  
Founding Physician, Chatham  
Medical Associates

**Richard Bunbury, '77**  
Lecturer in Music,  
Boston University

**Jolene Byrne, '05**  
Instructor, Armstrong State  
University; School Board President,  
Savannah-Chatham County  
Public Schools

**Howard K. Cohen, '54, '72**  
Executive Director, Team Savannah  
Weightlifting

**Raymond Ellis, Jr., '89**  
Choral and Drama Instructor,  
South Effingham High School and  
Middle School

**Kenya Harrison, '10**  
Owner, KMH Educational  
Enterprises, LLC

**Barbara Hubbard, '82**  
Lecturer, Armstrong State  
University College of Education

**Michael I. Kaplan, '08**  
CEO/Founder,  
Phase 2 Advantage

**M. Ann Levett, '76**  
Chief Academic Officer, Savannah-  
Chatham Public Schools

**Joseph Purvis, Jr., '76**  
Director of Transportation,  
St. John's County, Florida School  
District; U.S. Army, Retired

**Cathy J. Sakas, '76, '89**  
Founder, Gray's Reef Sanctuary  
Foundation; Co-Founder,  
Ocean Exchange

**Scott Scheidt, '03**  
Associate, Booz Allen Hamilton;  
Commander, Georgia Garrison  
Training Center

**Edward I. Wexler, '74**  
U.S. Air Force & Georgia Air  
National Guard, Retired

# amazing alumni

By Jessica Leigh Lebos

**M. Ann Levett, Ed.D.**  
**Chief Academic Officer**

**Savannah-Chatham County  
Public Schools**

**B.S. in Speech and Language  
Pathology, '76**

Armstrong graduate, M. Ann Levett worked her way through Armstrong as a Southern Bell telephone operator.

"I had the headset, the whole works," she laughs.

Her advisors encouraged her to focus on what she wanted to accomplish, so she changed her major from English to Speech Pathology, focusing on the area of Special Education.

After graduating from Armstrong, Levett went on to earn master's degrees in Special Education and Public Administration from Georgia Southern University and an Ed.D. from the University of Georgia.

After serving as a teacher and administrator in local school districts, she moved to higher education in Ohio and Connecticut. At Yale University School of Medicine, she served as executive director of the School Development Program, where she led a research group that focused on how to improve school environments, academic achievement and family engagement.

Levett traveled across the country and around the world to implement her findings. She returned to Georgia and became the dean of the School of Education at Macon State College, bringing many years of service in teacher preparation.

"As I look back over my career, I think having a background in special education has shown me that all people are really the same," she muses. "Culturally, there are differences, but basically all people want to be loved and cared for through a strong social network. Each has gifts to offer. The teacher's job is to help unwrap those gifts."

Last fall, Levett had the opportunity to bring her experience full circle, becoming the chief academic officer for Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools. Today, she works to provide the same strong foundation for others that public education provided for her.

"That's what a world class education does for you," she says. "It teaches you how to survive, thrive and think for yourself."





Armstrong prepares graduates to take on the world. Please meet two exceptional alumni who are making a major impact in their chosen fields.



**Drew Ernst**  
***Environmental Attorney***  
**HunterMaclean**  
**B.S. in Political**  
**Science, '74**

As an environmental law attorney with HunterMaclean in Savannah for the past 37 years, Drew Ernst has brokered land use agreements that protect our local creeks and wildlife, while accommodating a fast-growing industrial and commercial sector.

However, his career didn't begin with a plan as detailed as the permits he helps obtain for clients like Crossroads Business Center and The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort and Spa. Instead, this Savannah native attended Armstrong after graduating from Jenkins High School, thinking he might like to practice real estate or become a doctor.

"I took those aptitude tests, and one of them said I ought to be a preacher!" he laughs. "I knew that wasn't quite right."

He finally settled on political science as his chosen path as a way to effect change and influence policy.

"Academically, it was not a cakewalk at Armstrong," he recalls. "My professors were very tough."

As a statistician for Armstrong's basketball team and a representative in student government, Ernst enjoyed the university's "big college feel on a small campus." He considers his best day the time when he met an Armstrong nursing student named Kathy after a basketball game—they've been married for 38 years.

Ernst went on to receive his law degree from the University of Georgia and then returned to Savannah in the late 1970s, where he had completed several internships with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under then-district regulatory chief Steven Osvald. It was an exciting time for development and industry, as well as a turning point for environmental legislation that would protect surrounding waterways.

Ernst says his Armstrong education gave him the confidence to negotiate with multinational corporations, as well as to help with complex local developments like the Westin Savannah Harbor Resort on Hutchinson Island.

"I learned how to work with people—and, of course, we had a whole lot of fun," he smiles. "Armstrong has been a foundation that has served me well all of these years."

## 1970s

**Richard Bunbury '77** is a lecturer in music at Boston University.

**Patricia Lang Corcoran '70 '79 MEd '85** writes, "I love Armstrong! I have directed many of my students there with great results. Your new advertising campaign is awesome, because it informs the locals of what a jewel of a college we have here in Savannah."

**Floyd Harbin '74** retired as a brigadier general from the Georgia Air National Guard after 38 years of service.

**Michael J. Higgs '78** received his Doctorate in Public Administration from Valdosta State University on May 7. Retiring from the Navy after 22 years, Michael joined the Federal Civil Service in 2001 and has twice received the Navy's second highest civilian service award. Michael and his wife, the former Kathleen Brown '78, reside in Memphis, Tenn.

**Harry Hunter, Jr. '75**, a native of Savannah, is currently a faculty member in the University of Southern California's School of Social Work/Virtual Academic Center. Hunter was recently elected to serve on the City of Detroit's Brush Park Citizens' District Council for a three-year term ending on May 1, 2017. He received the Spirit of Detroit Award for exceptional achievement, outstanding leadership and dedication to improving the quality of life in Detroit.

**Carmel Williamson Sanders '78** is an attorney with The Law Firm of Carmel W. Sanders in Macon.

**William Scarborough III '75** is in his 22nd year at the Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C., where he is an associate chief accountant in the enforcement division investigating financial fraud. He is also in his second year of law school at the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia.

## 1980s

**Michael Barker '84** has been named Magistrate of the Year by his peers across the State of Georgia. He has been a Magistrate Court Judge in Chatham County for more than 10 years.

**Charlie Broad '88**, **Bill Gearhart '88** and **Mike Mitchener '90** were named to the Big South All-Decade Baseball Team for their performance as Pirates in the 1980s.

**David Dorondo '80** has been awarded the Creighton Sossomon Professorship in History at Western Carolina University, where he has been on the faculty since 1987. The professorship is for a three-year term.

**Susan Harbin '80** has spent 34 years in the information technology industry, including 19 years in the wireless industry.

**Stephanie Cooper Howard '88** has published a book, *A Little Girl Named Morgan*, about a child with Attention Deficit Disorder.

**Charles Mangan '83** is the director of corporate security for AGL Resources, the largest natural gas distribution company in the United States.

**Derek W. McAleer '80** has been named transitional director of administrative services for the South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. He was honored as the 2014 Public Relations, Development and Marketing Professional of the Year by the United Methodist Association in March.

**Dellarie Shilling '83** has been appointed to the Georgia Board of Nursing by Gov. Nathan Deal. A board-certified family nurse practitioner, she is also an assistant professor of nursing at Georgia Southern University.

## 1990s

**Kerry Coursey '91** is a graduate of Leadership Savannah's Class of 2014.

**Kathryn Haines Fernandez '95** earned a Master of Science degree in pharmaceutical sciences with a concentration in forensic science from the University of Florida on May 5.

**Andrea Graff Madison '96 MS '00** was one of 24 Georgia teachers to receive a Master Teacher certification from Gov. Nathan Deal in 2014. Coordinated by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the certification is based on demonstrated excellence in student achievement and student growth.

**Nick Mueller '93** and wife, **Tracy Barrenbrugge Mueller '93**, have opened a bed and breakfast, The Sugar House, in Guyton. They also operate The Laughing Boar Restaurant and Cakes by Tracy.

## 2000s

**Catherine Argrow Cummings '08 MAT '11** was named one of the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia's 2014

Women of Distinction. She teaches at Bloomingdale Elementary School in Bloomingdale, Ga.

**Michael Brown '09** has been promoted to the rank of captain in the U.S. Army.

**Marina Walp Byrd '01** earned a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore on May 15.

**Jolene Burge Byrne '05** is an instructor of sociology at Savannah State University. This summer, she was elected president of the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools Board of Education.

**Jeff Cook '01 MS '03** was appointed as the pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Albany, Ga., in June.

**Tosha Fowler** played the title role in the Broadway in Chicago and Emerald City Theatre production of "Charlotte's Web," July 11-Aug. 17.

**Amanda Robinson Futtrell '06** and husband, **Preston Futrell '07**, live in the Savannah area, where she works as an occupational therapist at a local skilled nursing facility. Preston recently joined Gulfstream as a chemical and hazardous materials specialist. They have two children, Rosalie (3) and Hugh (1), with a new addition due in November.

**Darneatha Gailliard '07 '08** is a student success coach at Strayer University in Virginia.

**Stephen Gontz '01** was recently appointed the new coordinator of criminal justice and forensic sciences at Louisiana State University at Eunice. In addition, he was admitted into a doctoral program in criminal justice with a concentration in emergency management and policy. He and wife Maria have three children: Nicole (19), Brittany (16) and Logan (12). Stephen recently returned from a year-long deployment with the Louisiana Army National Guard to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

**Rose Grant-Robinson '01** is a senior legal victims advocate with the Savannah Area Family Emergency Shelter. On May 7, she received the 2014 Liberty Bell Award from the Savannah Bar Association. She was previously named the 2012 Georgia Advocate of the Year by the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

**Bronwyn Harper '09** has been accepted into the graduate program at Michigan State University, where she will work



on certificates in immunodiagnostics, clinical flow cytometry and molecular laboratory diagnostics.

**Jamaal Hill '09** is the regional director of youth development for the YMCA of Florida's First Coast in St. Augustine, Fla.

**Anita Griffin Howard '03** has been named the women's basketball coach at Livingstone College in Salisbury, N.C.

**Patrick Jarrett '05** is a founding attorney with Jarrett & Price LLC in Savannah.

**James Kopp '00** has been promoted to chief parole officer in Statesboro. He previously served as assistant chief parole officer in Savannah.

**Marleen Kraaijenzank** has a new job as a sales and service agent with a specialty in communications at Solog Strand (Sun and Beach) in Aalborg, Denmark.

**Quentin Marlin '04** was elected as a partner at the Savannah law firm of Ellis, Painter, Ratterree & Adams, LLP in February 2014. He practices in the areas of banking, business, real estate and construction litigation.

**Ashley Mason '07** has been accepted into the Teach for America program. She will teach third grade at Eagle College Prep School in Phoenix, Ariz.

**Mac McCusker '02** had a solo ceramics exhibition, "Big Game," at the City of Savannah's Gallery S.P.A.C.E. in August and September.

**Amber Williams Moseley '08** is a human resources payroll and benefits specialist with ADP in Augusta, Ga.

**Michael Nestor '06** is the new director of bands at Savannah Arts Academy.

**Daniela Salas O'Connell '05** and husband, Daniel O'Connor, welcomed a baby girl, Eva Sofia, on Jan. 27.

**Chizoba Okeke '06** is a senior program manager at EMC.

**Candace Cox Purdom MEd '09** is an exceptional child teacher with Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools.

**Kirbi McGahee Ratner '05 MEd '06** was one of 24 Georgia teachers to receive a "Master Teacher" certification from Gov. Nathan Deal in 2014. Coordinated by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the certification is based on demonstrated excellence in student achievement and student growth.

**Melody Rodríguez '00 MEd '03** received the 2014 Savannah Women Who Rock Award from the Global Women's Summit on March 8.

**Kendra Keenan Seagraves '05** recently earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner from Georgia Southern University.

**Kelly Silverman '04** wrote and directed the short film, "Too Late Now," which was screened March 9 at the RXSM V Self Medicated Film Expo in Austin, Texas.

**Lisa Tyler '06** works at Winn Army Community Hospital at Fort Stewart in Hinesville, taking care of our nation's heroes. She previously worked in general pediatrics at Memorial Health University Medical Center from 2006-2011 and at Pediatric Associates of Savannah from 2011-2014.

**Rodrick Williams '01** is the new head of the football program at Claxton High School in Claxton, Ga., where he had worked previously as a line coach and defensive coordinator.

## 2010s

**Katherine Alt '12** is the executive assistant to the director at Telfair Museums in Savannah.

**Kevyn Arnott '10** is a principal digital designer with Capital One in San Francisco.

**Ethan Bader '14** has been signed to pitch for the River City Rascals, the Frontier League baseball team in O'Fallon, Mo. He is the fifth Pirate to play for the Rascals.

**Matt Bush DPT '12** recently participated in a professional exchange, where he and other U.S. Navy physical therapists provided services to local patients at The Veterans International Cambodia clinic, which serves war victims who are marginalized due to poverty.

**David Carter '13** has been accepted into the Master of Health Sciences program in occupational therapy at Georgia Regents University.

**Stephen Clark DPT '13** is a physical therapist at Texas Physical Therapy Specialists in Selma, Texas.

**James Climes '14** is being commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. After further training, he will report for duty at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C.

**Lisa Co '14** is a gallery docent at Armstrong.

**Seana Corbett '10** graduated with a master's degree in optometry from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in May. She is an intern at EnVision Eye Care in Savannah.

**Joseph DiNatale '14** is pursuing a master's degree in mathematics at Georgia Southern University.

**Ryan Groom '12** is a teaching assistant and research assistant in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department at Florida State University, where he is a graduate student studying solid state inorganic chemistry, utilizing flux methods for exploratory synthesis of metal sulfides.

**Maunalee Hashemi '13** received the Best Local Radio Personality award from *Connect Savannah* for her work on the Morning Showgram on Bob 106.9, where she formerly worked.

**Joshua Hill '14** has been accepted into the Master of Science program in conflict management at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga.

**Caitlin McNeill Hillard '13** lives in Wilmington, N.C., where she is a graphic designer at N2 Publishing.

**Brittany Hodges '11** is a management trainee at ITT Technical Institute in Aurora, Colo.

**Chaunte' Kettles '14** is a medical office assistant at Memorial Health in Savannah.

**Shanice King '12** is engaged to Antonio Shyne Solomon. She is a teacher in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System's Flexible Learning Program.

**Felicia Lowman '12** is working on an MFA in writing at Savannah College of Art and Design. She says, "If I had not gone to Armstrong and gotten the support from my classmates and professors, none of this would be possible."

**Clayton Miller '14** has been signed to play for the Arizona Giants, part of the San Francisco Giants organization. He played catcher for Armstrong's baseball team for four years.

**Rachael Mitchell MPH '12** served as a private sector advisor on the U.S. Delegation to the 67th World Health Assembly in Geneva from May 19-24. She is a doctoral student at Loma Linda University in California.

# CLASS NOTES

---

**Mark Mizelle MAT '13** is teaching eighth grade Georgia studies at the STEM Academy at Bartlett in Savannah.

**Jason Oliveira MED '12** is a student success advisor at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

**Kayley Ralton '10 MS '13** has been named assistant women's soccer coach at Armstrong.

**Madelyn Roush '13** has been accepted into the pharmacy school at the University of Florida to pursue a master's degree in forensic drug chemistry.

**Hollie Blair Salter '13** is a radiologic technologist at St. Joseph's/Candler in Savannah and Beaufort Memorial Hospital in Beaufort, S.C.

**Kara Simmons '11 MPH '13** has accepted a position as a health educator working with adolescent youth for the Coastal Health District in Savannah.

**Cailey Sparks '14** is a traffic coordinator assistant at L&L Broadcasting in Savannah.

**Maria del Mar Tovar '12** has been hired as a communications manager at Oldcastle in Atlanta.

**Kristy Roberts Walker '10** teaches pre-K in a Title 1 magnet school in Jacksonville, Fla.

**Caralea Wilson '12** has been hired as a production manager at Campus Banner + Design in Clemson, S.C. She is working on a Master of Science degree in graphic communication at Clemson University.

**Brian Wood '14** writes, "I obtained my certification of cyber forensic examiner while interning at Armstrong's police department. This certification alone has opened many doors for me in the field of criminal justice. I'm currently being vetted for U.S. Customs and plan on being at the top of my class."

## MARRIAGES

**Laura Clark Chan '86 MSN '01** married Richard Donald "Donnie" Wood, Jr., a widower and 30-year retired Navy vet, on March 15.

**Stephen Clark DPT '13** married **Danielle Farthing DPT '14** on the beach at Tybee Island on May 8.

**Shelby Duff '14** married **Joseph Snooks II '14** in Statesboro on May 31.

**Josh Felice '10** married Ashley Frasca in Biloxi Beach on June 10.

**Brett Hillard '12** married Caitlin McNeill on Sept. 12.

**Dianne Miller '04** married Karrol Johnson in McDonough, Ga., on June 9.

**Hollie Blair Salter '13** married Christopher Morgan Ellington at Southern Bridle Farms in Fort Valley, Ga., on April 12.

**Kristy Roberts Walker '10** married Lucas Walker in Jacksonville Beach, Fla., on June 13.

## BIRTHS

**Jessica Waldron Thompson '07** and her husband Matt welcomed their second daughter, Adaline, on April 30.

---

## IN MEMORIAM

William Belford '76, August 11, 2014

Randall C. Bishop '79, July 1, 2014

George D. Boring '68, April 21, 2014

Douglas William Boulware attended 1968, March 16, 2014

Mary Dewberry Brooks '70, August 2, 2014

William W. Brown, Jr. '73, April 10, 2014

Anita F. Collins '69, August 6, 2014

Marie Lyons Crider '44, May 25, 2014

Janis Kistler Doye '70, May 10, 2014

Vickie Riddle Erskine '76, July 20, 2014

David E. Foye, Sr. '74, August 12, 2014

Erwin A. Friedman '50, March 5, 2014

Jeannette E. Glynn '46, February 2, 2014

Mary Oppen Harris '43, April 25, 2014

Beverly Nutting Hatch '73, May 28, 2014

Judge James Wesley Head '50, June 9, 2014

Colonel Arthur L. Holmes, Jr. (Ret.) '76, August 14, 2014

Arthur Wesley Howe '56 and '84, April 18, 2014

Dixie S. Hubbard '95, May 12, 2014

Michael Tyson Joyner, Sr. '70, July 25, 2014

Linda Cubbedge Langston '72, August 18, 2014

Louise Vaughn Lauretti '11, September 21, 2014

Glenda Harriet Taylor Lax '50, March 2, 2014

Eugene McCracken, Esq. '52, March 5, 2014

Jimmy Lynn Mitchell '83, May 8, 2014

Elizabeth "Bettye" Morekis '54, July 7, 2014

Edward H. Morgan '37, April 2, 2014

Edward M. Moultrie, Jr. '91, March 23, 2014

Holly Susan Heller Mruz attended '73, May 9, 2014

Robert L. Murphy, Jr. '87, April 6, 2014

Robert William Patterson '83, July 12, 2014

Rev. Gary B. Quinney '91, April 10, 2014

Irvin Rubnitz '83, May 17, 2014

Dorothy Satterfield '71, April 21, 2014

Richard Alan Segall '69, March 7, 2014

Edwin C. Shepherd, Sr. '41, May 30, 2014

Ida Frances Cottingham Traxler '43, '83, April 13, 2014

Patricia S. Tyson '97, May 19, 2014

Dianne H. Walker '73, May 12, 2014

Gloria Kicklighter Warren '43, June 13, 2014

Gregory Eugene Weeks '88, August 16, 2014

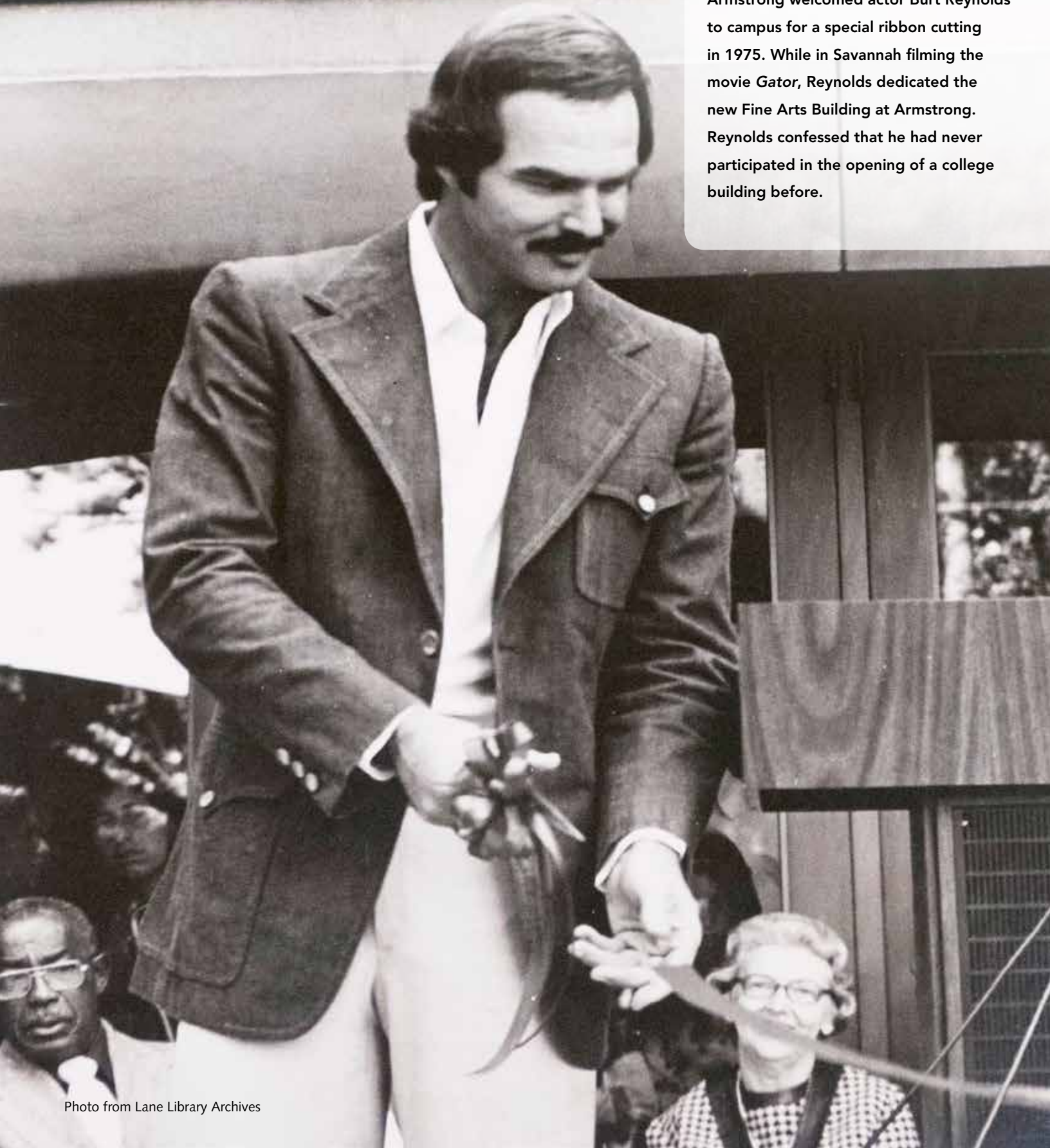
Thomas "Tommy" Franklin Williams '80, June 24, 2014



# armstrong flashback

## Did you know?

Armstrong welcomed actor Burt Reynolds to campus for a special ribbon cutting in 1975. While in Savannah filming the movie *Gator*, Reynolds dedicated the new Fine Arts Building at Armstrong. Reynolds confessed that he had never participated in the opening of a college building before.



# Armstrong

Office of Advancement

Armstrong State University

11935 Abercorn Street

Savannah, Georgia 31419-1997

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage

PAID

Savannah, GA  
Permit No. 380

[armstrong.edu](http://armstrong.edu)



**SAVE THE DATE:** DON'T MISS THESE TWO UPCOMING CELEBRATIONS!



**FEBRUARY 6-7, 2015**



PAINT THE TOWN **MAROON**

**Armstrong**

**MARCH 27, 2015**

